

THE CITY OF BELLEVILLE will grow 10 times in size if Belleville Lake is acquired and the land needed for its development is added to the city. The dark line in the center of this photograph outlines the present city boundaries. The dark line at the top (I-94 expressway) and the line at the bottom (Bemis Rd.) indi-

cates the north and south boundaries. The sides of the photograph, from Rawsonville Rd. on the west (left) to Hannan Rd. on the east indicate the area the city would like to acquire along with the lake itself. City officials say this is necessary to make the lake purchase financially feasible.

Lake consultant hired

12-3-62

Engineer to advise Belleville on purchase

BELLEVILLE — If a consulting engineer engaged by the Belleville Chamber of Commerce makes a favorable recommendation, action may be taken by the city in the purchase of the French Landing Dam and Belleville Lake from the Detroit Edison Co.

The consultant, Donald M. Oakes of Grand Rapids, was recently hired by the C of C to investigate the feasibility of the city acquiring the lake and adjoining property, the best method of doing so, and the possible development and use of the lake as a recreational area.

He is expected to make a report to the Industrial Development Committee of the C of C within 60 days. This report together with the recommendations of the committee will then be presented to the City Council for consideration, according to R. Merrill Bird, secretary of the Chamber and vice-president of the National Bank of Detroit's Belleville branch.

According to legal sources and Edison officials, there is no legal reason that the utility firm could not "pull the plug" on the lake and let the impounded waters "escape," if it desired.

However, R. H. Taylor of Detroit, director of real estate for the firm, said there is little chance of this being done.

He admitted that the maintenance of the dam and spillways, taxes on the property and similar costs are extensive, with no present return to the utility company.

He said the power station was closed and the main generator removed a year ago, after having been on a stand-by basis for many years.

The dam was constructed in 1925, and some work must be done on the dam, merely to maintain it. At the present time a spillway below the dam to divert overflow waters is deteriorating and requires work.

Mr. Taylor said Edison would not negotiate with any other municipality until such time as the City of Belleville firmly indicate they do not wish to purchase the property, which has tentatively been offered to the city for several years.

Due to legal requirements governing the establishment of Township governments, Van Buren Township is not legally able to enter into negotiations for the property.

No firm price has been given for the sale of the lake, which totals about 1,300 acres, but Mr. Taylor admitted that a purchase price of \$400,000 "would not be out of line." He said the estimated value of the lake itself would be about \$1,000,000.

Other municipalities have also evidenced an interest in the purchase of the lake property, including both Ypsilanti Township and the City of Ann Arbor.



THE FRENCH LANDING DAM is the "plug" in the Huron River that creates Belleville Lake. Shown here is the dam and powerhouse, owned by the Detroit Edison Co. and now offered for

sale to the City of Belleville. On each side of the powerhouse are the spillway doors to lower the lake level when necessary. —Press Photo

Supervisor Roy Smith of Ypsilanti Township said that a recent news story of his township's interest in the development of Ford Lake did not imply that the township was no longer interested in the Belleville Lake problem. Ypsilanti Township is the only other adjacent municipality to the lake.

"Recreational facilities and land

are something you can't get too much of," Smith said, and "We would be interested in any development in the vicinity because any such development will affect (Ypsilanti) township."

He said the township would like

to work with anyone developing a feasible plan for the development of the lake area as a recreational area, and that this would be a community asset.

Guy C. Larcom, Jr., Ann Arbor city administrator, said the city no longer was interested

in waters this far from the Ann Arbor area. He said that negotiations were nearly complete between the city and Edison in

transferring four ponds to city ownership, and that this was all the city contemplates at this time.

In a Belleville City Council

meeting Aug. 20, council members and Mayor Jay J. Herkimer informally discussed with city Attorney Charles E. Cozadd possible means of obtaining the lake and property adjoining the lake.

City officials maintain that a certain amount of land must be acquired to make it financially feasible for the city to acquire the lake.

The possibility of annexing portions of Van Buren Township and an alternate method of re-incorporating a larger area as the city have both been discussed.

This would also require that the city charter be withdrawn, and that Belleville revert to a village status temporarily, a more involved procedure.

Mr. Bird said that many residents of the township who do not hold lakeshore property are both incensed and worried by the use of the word "annexation."

Both he and Mayor Herkimer say they prefer the term "amalgamation"

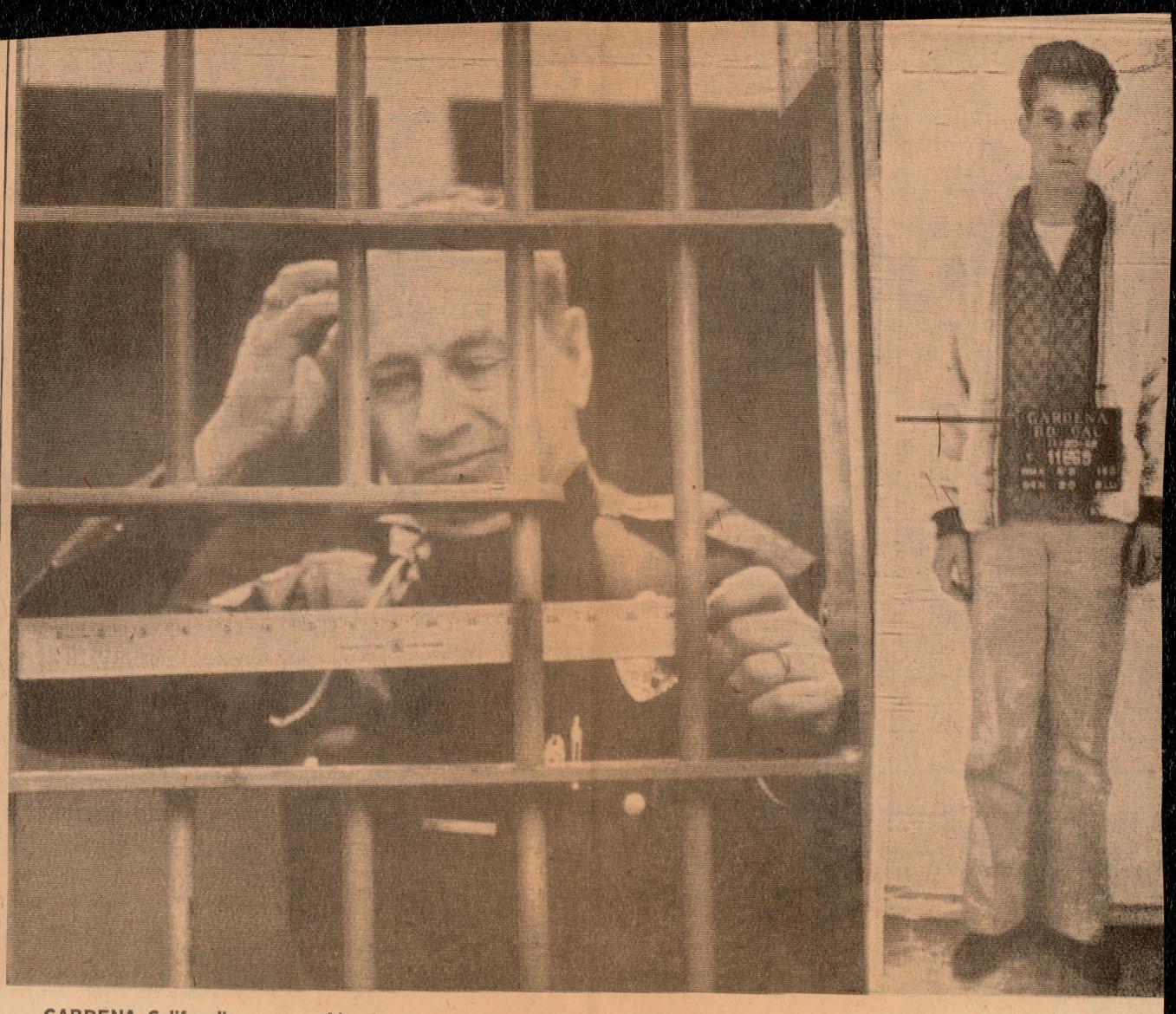
as a means of describing the merging of the areas.

City officials who favor a merger said persons living in the added areas would reap many advantages, including twice weekly garbage and rubbish pickups, increased police protection and a decrease in fire rates.

However, the land expected to be "amalgamated" with Belleville would increase the city area by more than 10 times. This would also mean that services would have to be expanded considerably.

City officials have discussed the possibility of annexing the property from the I-94 Expressway south to Bemis Rd. between the Washtenaw-Wayne Counties line on Rawsonville Rd. east to Hannan Rd.

But all municipal officials agree that if Belleville Lake is to be maintained, some solution must be arrived at—and soon—while property values still allow reasonable development of land for recreational purposes.



GARDENA, Calif. police are searching for an escaped burglary and forgery suspect who is only six inches thick, 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide and still uses that "Greasy Kid Stuff" with a high degree of success. Roger Rhoden (right) escaped Saturday through the

tray slot of his cell after he apparently greased himself with petroleum jelly before wriggling through the narrow slot. He has not been seen since. Jailer R. I. Clifton appears puzzled as he measures the opening. (UPI Telephoto)

Skindivers to try 1,000 ft. depth

Will breathe secret mixture instead of air

AVALON, Santa Catalina Island Calif. (AP) — Two frogmen are scheduled to make a record dive to 1,000 feet today, staking their lives on a secret mixture of gases they will breathe instead of air.

They are Hannes Keller, a Swiss mathematician who descended to 728 feet in June 1962, and skindiver John Light of New York, who is going along "to prove anybody can do it if they know the secret."

Most skindivers get the bends at depths below 200 feet from extreme pressures which make the nitrogen in their blood and tissues bubble painfully, sometimes fatally.

Keller, who used a computer to work out his non-nitrogen breathing mixture, says he is confident he will eventually be able to reach 3,000 feet.

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